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Letter dated 30 April 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached concept note with a view to a briefing in the Security Council on the question of combating terrorism in Africa in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security to be held on 13 May 2013.

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) Kodjo **Menan**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 30 April 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for a briefing in the Security Council on the question of combating terrorism in Africa in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security

13 May 2013

Introduction

Under its second Security Council presidency, Togo proposes the holding of a high-level briefing on 13 May 2013 on the question of combating terrorism in Africa in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Terrorism in Africa now plays a major role on the current international scene; its features are evolving to become increasingly complex and transnational. Africa runs the risk of becoming its epicentre.

Terrorism undoubtedly represents one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and remains a major cause for concern not only for African States, but for the international community as a whole.

The commitment of the international community to combat terrorism and the determination to eradicate it have mainly been demonstrated through the adoption of several legal instruments and the establishment of specialized institutions. In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with a special team to facilitate coordination and ensure coherence in actions to combat terrorism and provide assistance in implementing the Strategy. Furthermore, pursuant to its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001) and 1989 (2011) inter alia, the Security Council has established subsidiary bodies that participate in the effort to combat terrorism.

Of course, the legal and institutional framework has resulted in the necessary international cooperation with all the parties. However, various objectives can only be achieved through efforts that go beyond addressing the symptoms of terrorism and get to its roots.

These institutions are now grappling with recent events in Africa that call for more engagement.

I. Overview of the phenomenon in Africa

Terrorism in Africa today, taking all the sub-regions as a whole, is shaped by the activities of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujaahidiin, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad (Boko Haram), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Ansar Eddine.

These terrorist groups are also beginning to form an alliance to form a sort of "Terror Incorporated" and have put down roots at the national level in several

countries, to the point where it is now difficult to distinguish between international terrorism and local terrorism. Even worse, the activities of these terrorist groups pose a serious threat to the efforts of international missions for peacebuilding and peacekeeping, for example in Somalia and Mali.

II. Regional responses

Africa's efforts to address the terrorist threat, including at the sub-regional level, are not new. Measures taken in that area were intended to be preventive, coordinated and rely on multiple initiatives.

In July 1999, the African Union adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which entered into force on 6 December 2002. An additional protocol to establish implementation mechanisms and organs for the Convention was adopted in Addis Ababa on 8 July 2004. A plan of action was adopted at the African Union High-level Meeting on Prevention and Combating of Terrorism held in Algiers in September 2002.

As a result of this plan, the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (CAERT) was established, headquartered in Algiers.

With a view to harmonizing national legislation and to give United Nations resolutions against terrorism binding force, on 15 December 2010, CAERT hosted a meeting of experts from African Union member States to consider a draft model law on combating terrorism.

Within the institutional framework set up by the African Union to combat terrorism, a major role was given to the Commission and to the Peace and Security Council in coordinating efforts undertaken across the continent.

In addition, such bodies as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), the Central African Monetary Union (CAMU), etc. took several initiatives on various aspects of action against terrorism, including regional and sub-regional judicial cooperation in criminal matters, financing of terrorism or money laundering, law enforcement and border control.

III. The question of combating terrorism

An analysis of the threat posed by terrorist groups on the African continent gives rise to great concern; rightly or wrongly, it confounds political, religious and ideological extremism with organized crime.

Thus far the necessary regional cooperation has been difficult to come by. The stumbling block seems to be the lack of resources among States of the region, but also historical, cultural and political differences, as well as the inevitable territorial disputes and fears that national sovereignty will be undermined.

Despite the efforts of States in recent years to allocate adequate resources and to establish appropriate institutions to address the conditions conducive to the emergence of terrorism, clear weaknesses are revealed in Africa.

The cost of combating terrorism is such that vast sums are devoted to it that could have been used for priority development activities by African States.

The considerable sums generated by ransom paid to terrorists and other opportunistic criminal activities are often used to purchase more sophisticated weapons, recruit more terrorists and conduct large-scale attacks. Such criminal activities seem to have a ripple effect by feeding terrorism in Africa and criminal activities which prosper in other regions of the world.

Terrorist activities undermine efforts to consolidate the rule of law and democracy. Thus, the significant evolution of terrorism in this part of the world raises the risk of destabilization in Africa and disintegration of its States. All in all, while the threshold of the terrorist threat varies according to sub-region, terrorism causes weakening and even the collapse of African States, which, incidentally, are ill-equipped to deal with it. The major risk is that Africa will become a training camp, a recruitment base and transit point for terrorists and a centre for mobilizing funds for other illegal activities.

Worse, it is to be feared that terrorists will manage to take control of territories containing strategic natural resources for the international community, in particular oil, uranium, diamonds and many more.

IV. Objectives

The question of terrorism is often debated in the Security Council and resolutions, presidential statements and press statements have been adopted.

However, the debates held to date have always been rather general in nature and it has not been possible to dwell on the specific factors and consequences of terrorism in Africa, along with regional efforts and the need for greater assistance from the international community.

At a time when terrorism is becoming more embedded in Africa, with the situation in northern Mali, the Sahel-Sahara region and Nigeria in particular becoming a major cause for concern, it is necessary to conduct a review of the situation and the responses to it to date.

The question becomes even more urgent when one realizes that, whatever security measures are put in place, a terrorist with sufficient determination will always find a way around them.

A briefing on the threat of terrorism, focused on Africa, will thus take into account its specific characteristics in order to promote appropriate attention and the necessary awareness to rectify its vulnerability to terrorism.

V. Outcome

The expected outcome of the briefing would be the adoption of a presidential statement.